

Categorical Exclusion Determination

Bonneville Power Administration

Department of Energy



Proposed Action: Discovery-Chenoweth Transmission Line Upgrade

Project No.: L0355

Project Manager: Jim Semrau – TEP-TPP-1

Location: Wasco County, Oregon

Categorical Exclusion Applied (from Subpart D, 10 C.F.R. Part 1021): B4.13 Upgrading and rebuilding existing powerlines

Description of the Proposed Action: Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) proposes to upgrade its 0.24-mile long Discovery-Chenoweth transmission line in Wasco County, Oregon. The upgrade would involve replacing a wood-pole H-frame structure, the line's conductor, and various equipment within the Chenoweth Substation. The upgrade would allow BPA to serve 90 megawatts of power requested by Northern Wasco Public Utility District (NWPUD) to meet their increased load demand. The upgrade is required to meet North American Reliability Corporation system performance standards and maintain reliability associated with NWPUD's request.

The Discovery-Chenoweth 115-kilovolt transmission line runs from NWPUD's Discovery Substation to BPA's Chenoweth Substation on BPA fee-owned right-of-way. The existing conductor would temporarily be suspended on a boom truck while the existing structure is replaced. BPA would replace structure 1/2, a wood-pole H-frame, with a similar structure that would be 5 feet taller. The replacement structure and associated guy wires would be placed within 15 feet of the existing structure. Once the structure is replaced, the conductor would be replaced. Equipment used would include a tensioner, reel truck, bull dozer and bucket truck. Equipment would be staged in the areas surrounding structures 1/1 and 1/2 and some grading would occur.

BPA would also upgrade equipment inside the yard at Chenoweth Substation including disconnect switches, potential voltage transformers, and rigid risers. Supplies for the work would be stored adjacent to Chenoweth Substation on BPA property.

Findings: In accordance with Section 1021.410(b) of the Department of Energy's (DOE) National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Regulations (57 FR 15144, Apr. 24, 1992, as amended at 61 FR 36221-36243, July 9, 1996; 61 FR 64608, Dec. 6, 1996, 76 FR 63764, Nov. 14, 2011), BPA has determined that the proposed action:

- (1) fits within a class of actions listed in Appendix B of 10 CFR 1021, Subpart D (see attached Environmental Checklist);
- (2) does not present any extraordinary circumstances that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and
- (3) has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

Based on these determinations, BPA finds that the proposed action is categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

/s/ Elizabeth Siping

Elizabeth Siping
Contract Environmental Protection Specialist
Flux Resources, LLC

Reviewed by:

/s/ Gene Lynard

Gene Lynard
Supervisory Environmental Protection Specialist

Concur:

/s/ Stacy L. Mason

Stacy L. Mason
NEPA Compliance Officer

Date: September 9, 2016

Attachment: Environmental Checklist

Categorical Exclusion Environmental Checklist

This checklist documents environmental considerations for the proposed project and explains why the project would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources and would meet other integral elements of the applied categorical exclusion.

Proposed Action: Discovery-Chenoweth Transmission Line Upgrade

Project Site Description

The transmission line upgrade would take place within BPA right-of-way that crosses land owned by Port of The Dalles, BPA, and two private landowners. The line right-of-way is less than ¼ mile long, contains two towers, and spans Chenoweth Creek and its floodplain near where it enters the Columbia River. The transmission line structures are located well above the creek. Work would also occur inside Chenoweth Substation yard, which is sited between Interstate 84 and the Columbia River. The surrounding area is being developed by Port of the Dalles for commercial use.

Evaluation of Potential Impacts to Environmental Resources

Environmental Resource Impacts	No Potential for Significance	No Potential for Significance, with Conditions
1. Historic and Cultural Resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The Oregon State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with BPA's determination of no adverse effect on August 2, 2016. Consulting parties for this project include: the Burns Paiute Tribe, Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Nation, The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Confederated Tribes of Siletz, Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Reservation of Oregon, and Nez Perce Tribe. No response was received from those tribes. Also, Cowlitz Indian Tribe was a consulting party who responded on March 29, 2016 and requested that inadvertent discovery language be included (see below).</p> <p><u>Mitigation:</u> In the event any archaeological material is encountered during project activities, the following actions should be taken:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stop work in the vicinity and immediately notify the BPA environmental lead, a BPA archaeologist, appropriate BPA project staff, interested Tribes, Oregon SHPO, and the appropriate local, state, and federal agencies.• Implement reasonable measures to protect the discovery site, including any appropriate stabilization or covering.• Take reasonable steps to ensure the confidentiality of the discovery site, including restricting access.		
2. Geology and Soils	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> The structure would be replaced within 15 feet of the existing structure in previously disturbed area.</p> <p><u>Mitigation:</u> Best Management Practices would be used for erosion control and to minimize any potential impacts to the creek or riparian areas.</p>		
3. Plants (including federal/state special-status species)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p><u>Explanation:</u> No plants will require removal and no special-status species are known to occur in the project area.</p>		

4. **Wildlife** (including federal/state special-status species and habitats)



Explanation: No special-status species are known to occur in the project area.

Mitigation: Bird diverters would be added to new conductor in order to reduce potential for avian collisions.

5. **Water Bodies, Floodplains, and Fish** (including federal/state special-status species and ESUs)



Explanation: The transmission line crosses Chenoweth Creek, which is critical habitat for protected Middle Creek Columbia River Steelhead, is a floodplain, and is considered navigable by the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). BPA would obtain a Rivers and Harbors Act Section 10 Permit from ACOE due to proposed work on the line. No work in or near Chenoweth Creek or its floodplain is proposed and therefore, no impacts to fish would occur.

6. **Wetlands**



Explanation: Wetlands are present in association with Chenoweth Creek; however, no work is proposed in or near wetlands.

7. **Groundwater and Aquifers**



Explanation: No new wells or use of groundwater is proposed.

8. **Land Use and Specially Designated Areas**



Explanation: No change to land use is proposed.

9. **Visual Quality**



Explanation: The new wood pole would be 5 feet taller than the existing pole but otherwise would look the same and would be placed in the same area.

10. **Air Quality**



Explanation: A small amount of dust and vehicle emissions would occur during construction.

11. **Noise**



Explanation: A temporary increase in noise would occur during construction.

12. **Human Health and Safety**



Explanation: No impact to human health and safety is anticipated.

Evaluation of Other Integral Elements

The proposed project would also meet conditions that are integral elements of the categorical exclusion. The project would not:

- Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators) that are not otherwise categorically excluded.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases.

Explanation, if necessary:

- Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.

Explanation, if necessary:

Landowner Notification, Involvement, or Coordination

Description: The landowner has been notified of the project.

Based on the foregoing, this proposed project does not have the potential to cause significant impacts on any environmentally sensitive resources.

Signed: /s/ Elizabeth Siping
Elizabeth Siping
Environmental Protection Specialist

Date: September 9, 2016